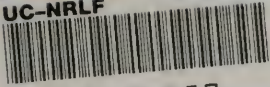


940g  
C891  
f

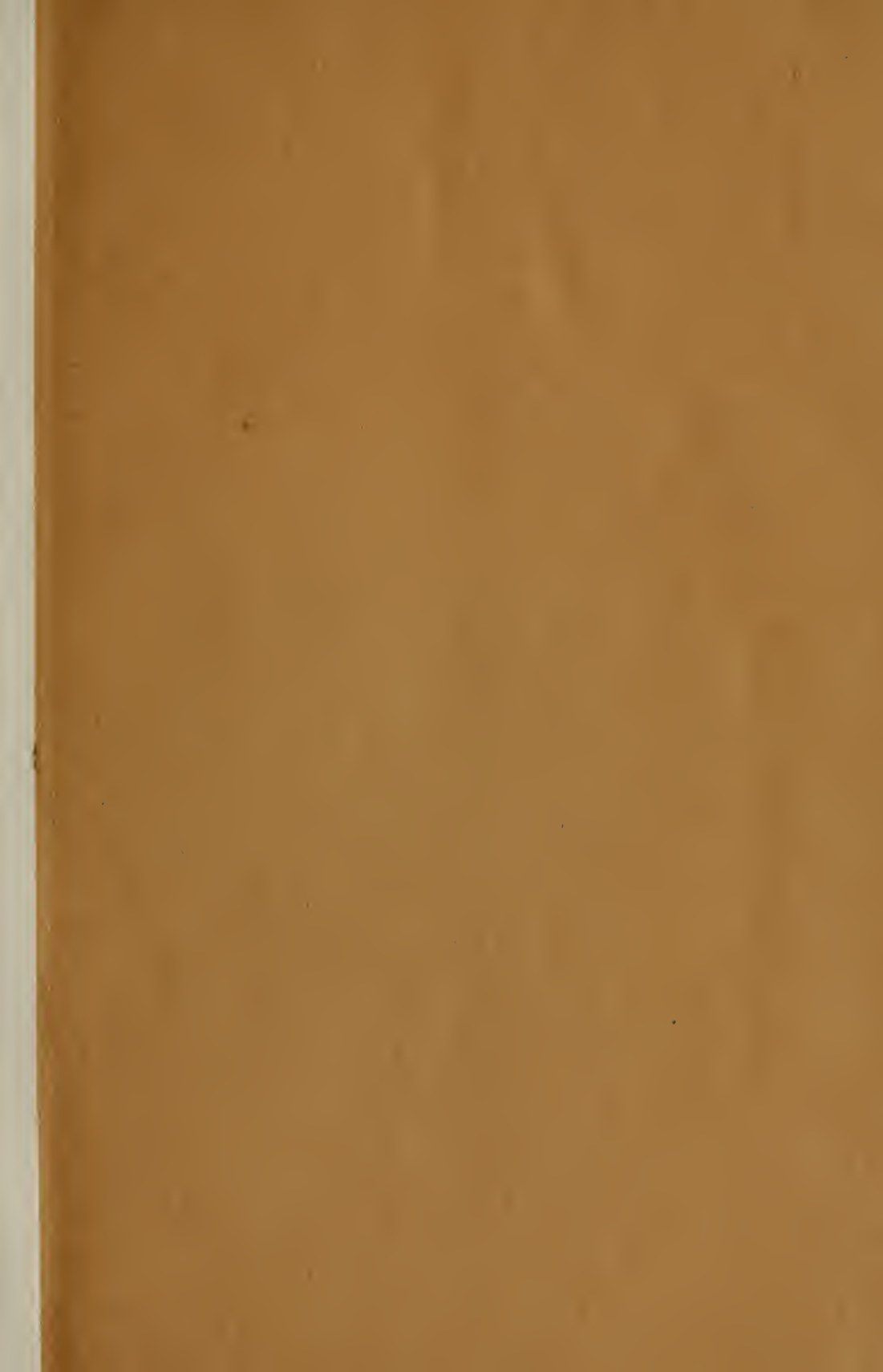
UC-NRLF



B 3 569 857









A FRENCH INFLUENCE ON GOLDSMITH'S  
*CITIZEN OF THE WORLD*

DONALD S. CRANE AND HAMILTON JEWETT SMITH

Reprinted for private circulation from  
MODERN PHILOLOGY, Vol. XIX, No. 1, August 1921



CALIFORNIA

9409  
C89M  
f

A FRENCH INFLUENCE ON GOLDSMITH'S  
*CITIZEN OF THE WORLD*

In spite of the fact that Goldsmith himself supplied the clue in a footnote, no one seems to have called attention to the close filiation which exists between the *Citizen of the World* and the *Lettres Chinoises* of the Marquis d'Argens.<sup>1</sup> Yet the most cursory examination of the text of the latter work is sufficient to show that Goldsmith was indebted to it, not only for certain general elements of his scheme, but also for assistance of a very material kind in filling in his design.<sup>2</sup>

The *Lettres Chinoises, ou Correspondance philosophique, historique et critique, entre un Chinois voyageur à Paris et ses correspondans à la Chine, en Muscovie, en Perse et au Japon*, by Jean Baptiste de Boyer, Marquis d'Argens (1704-71), was one of the most popular of the many imitations of the *Lettres Persanes* which the "mouvement philosophique" called forth in France. First printed in 1739,<sup>3</sup> it reached a fifth edition in 1756,<sup>4</sup> and, with the possible exception of the *Lettres Juives* (1738), was the best known of the writings of its author, one of the minor, but not least intransigent, members of the Voltairean party. Like d'Argens' other works, it had readers in England almost from the start. A translation, under the title of *Chinese Letters*,

<sup>1</sup> D'Argens' work is listed among possible models of the *Citizen of the World* in the *Works of Oliver Goldsmith*, ed. J. W. M. Gibbs, III (London, 1885), 1, but no positive assertion of influence is made. The latest student of Goldsmith's sources, Mr. L. J. Davidson in *Modern Language Notes* for April, 1921 (XXXVI, 215-20), confines his study of the "forerunners" of the *Citizen* to such well-known examples of the "foreign observer" type as the *Turkish Spy*, Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes*, and Lyttleton's *Persian Letters*, and does not mention d'Argens even by title.

<sup>2</sup> I had collected the greater part of the evidence of this indebtedness when I learned that Dr. Smith had discovered the same evidence quite independently while preparing an edition of the *Citizen of the World*. Although he expects to publish some of his results shortly in the form of a general monograph on the *Citizen*, he agreed with me that the influence of d'Argens was interesting and important enough to deserve to be made public without delay, and very kindly agreed to the present collaboration. The reader is referred to his forthcoming study for further passages from the *Lettres Chinoises*, and for evidence of borrowing by Goldsmith from other writers as striking, if not so extensive, as that from d'Argens.—R. S. C.

<sup>3</sup> Lanson, *Manuel bibliographique de la littérature française moderne* (Paris, 1909-12), Nos. 9894, 10199.

<sup>4</sup> A la Haye, chez Pierre Gosse ... Nicholas Van Daalen ... M.DCC.LVI. 6 vols., Svo. All references in the present article are to this edition.



appeared in 1741,<sup>1</sup> and was reprinted, with the title changed to *The Chinese Spy*, in 1751.<sup>2</sup> "It is an ingenious and very entertaining performance," declared the *Monthly Review* on the occasion of this reissue,<sup>3</sup> "and is sufficiently known to excuse our saying any thing more of it."

In the edition of 1756, the *Lettres Chinoises* contained 162 letters, supposed to have been exchanged among seven Chinamen resident or traveling in different parts of Asia and Europe.<sup>4</sup> As each of the correspondents described minutely the manners, institutions, religious observances, and beliefs of the people among whom he was living, the work was a storehouse of historical and sociological information on China, Persia, Japan, Siam, Russia, Scandinavia, Germany, and France, drawn for the most part from such well-known eighteenth-century authorities as Du Halde, Chardin, Kemper, Hyde, Picart, and Vertot, but occasionally, as in many of the letters on life at Paris, from first-hand observation. The descriptive intention, however, was subordinate throughout to the critical: the book was essentially an enormous "philosophical" pamphlet, in which the delineations of places and manners and the narratives of past events served in most cases but as starting-points for developments on the author's favorite themes of toleration and anticlericalism.

How or when Goldsmith became acquainted with the *Lettres Chinoises* it is impossible to say. In his *Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning* (1759), he included d'Argens in a list of contemporary French authors "who do honour to the present age, and whose writings will be transmitted to posterity with an ample share of fame"; but he dismissed him in a single sentence, and mentioned none of his works.<sup>5</sup> All that is certain is that he knew

<sup>1</sup> Martha Pike Conant, *The Oriental Tale in England* (New York, 1908), p. 277. There is a copy at Harvard.

<sup>2</sup> See *Monthly Review*, V (November, 1751), 460.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* The same number of the *Review* contained a character of d'Argens, "one of the greatest wits in Europe," quoted from *The Beau Philosopher; or the History of the Chevalier de Mainvilliers*. Translated from the French original (*ibid.*, pp. 392-95).

<sup>4</sup> Their names were Siou-Tcheou (France, Germany, Poland), Choang (Persia), Tlao (Russia and Scandinavia), Kieou-Che (Japan and Siam), I-Tuly (Rome), Siou-Theou (whereabouts not indicated), and Yn-Che-Chan (Pekin). Most of the letters were addressed to Yn-Che-Chan.

<sup>5</sup> *Works*, ed. Gibbs, III, 494-95. There is a similar reference to d'Argens in the *Memoirs of M. de Voltaire*, written in 1759 but apparently not published until 1761 (*ibid.*, IV, 42-43, 45).



the *Lettres Chinoises* by the end of January, 1760, when he began to contribute his own *Chinese Letters* to Newberry's *Public Ledger*, and that he read the work in the original.<sup>1</sup>

Was it the example of d'Argens that determined his choice of a Chinese prolocutor for his series? If there is any basis for the tradition reported by one of his biographers, that this choice was an afterthought, his original design having been to write for Newberry a series of African letters,<sup>2</sup> it is at least possible to suspect that his final decision was precipitated by a reading or re-reading of the *Lettres Chinoises*. But there is nothing conclusive about this; nor can we draw any certain inference from the fact that he used as a caption for his essays in the *Ledger* a literal translation of d'Argens' title, though the coincidence is surely striking. The truth is that Goldsmith's interest in China antedated by several years at least his connection with the *Public Ledger*, and was nourished by other works besides that of d'Argens. Goguet's *De l'Origine des Loix, des Arts et des Sciences*, which he analyzed, with particular mention of the portions relating to China, in the *Critical Review* for March, 1759;<sup>3</sup> Murphy's *Orphan of China*, which he reviewed in the next number but one of the same journal;<sup>4</sup> Percy's as yet unpublished collections for his *Hau Kiou Chooan*, which he had seen as early as May, 1759<sup>5</sup>—these in themselves were no doubt sufficient to account for his choice. Moreover, a sentence in a letter to Robert Bryanton, written in August, 1758, points to a certain interest in Chinese material at a date earlier still. "If ever my works find their way to Tartary or China," he remarked at the end of a humorous discussion of literary fame, "I know the consequence. Suppose one of your Chinese Owanowitzers instructing one of your Tartarian Chiano-bacchi—you see I use Chinese names to show my own erudition, as I shall soon make our Chinese talk like an European to show his."<sup>6</sup> Whatever the source of this "erudition," it certainly did not come from the *Lettres Chinoises*.

<sup>1</sup> See *Citizen of the World*, Letter XLIII, where it is referred to in a footnote as "Let. Chin." (*Works*, ed. Gibbs, III, 163, n. 4.)

<sup>2</sup> James Prior, *The Life of Oliver Goldsmith*, I (London, 1837), 360: "It may gratify curiosity to know that his first design according to accounts of his friends was to make his hero a native of Morocco or Fez."

<sup>3</sup> See *Works*, ed. Gibbs, IV, 346.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 350-55.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 351, note.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 437.

But if d'Argens had no demonstrable part in the original conception of the *Citizen of the World*, his influence on its composition was both precise and fairly extensive. The most obvious and striking manifestation of this influence consisted in a number of definite text borrowings, amounting in nearly all cases to reasonably close translations, and involving in several instances the content of whole essays. The following parallel, chosen rather for its typical quality than for its extent, will give an idea of their general character.

## D'ARGENS, LETTRE LXXIX

La plupart des voyageurs ne parlent que de la grandeur des fleuves qu'ils ont traversés, que de la hauteur des montagnes qu'ils ont vûes, que des marchandises qui se vendent dans les villes. Tout ce-la est bon pour des Géographes, ou pour des Négocians; mais quel profit peut en retirer un Philosophe qui cherche de connoître le cœur humain, qui veut examiner les hommes dans tous les païs, pour mieux découvrir la différence que mettent parmi eux l'opposition du climat, la diversité de Religion, l'éducation, les prejugués & les mœurs. Je t'avoüe, cher Yn-Che-Chan, que je m'estimerois bien malheureux, si en retournant à la Chine, je ne rapportois d'autre fruit de mon voïage que de savoir que les rues de Paris sont fort larges; que les maisons y sont très élevées; que les habitans aiment la parure, & portent des habits courts & étroits; que les draps & les étoffes de soïe y sont très communes; que les Prêtres ont des robes noires & longues, qu'ils chantent dans les rues lorsqu'ils font des processions, & qu'ils ne se marient pas. Combien de voïageurs n'y a-t-il pas, dont les relations

## GOLDSMITH, LETTER VII

. . . . Let European travellers cross seas and deserts merely to measure the height of a mountain, to describe the cataract of a river, or tell the commodities which every country may produce: merchants or geographers, perhaps, may find profit by such discoveries; but what advantage can accrue to a philosopher from such accounts, who is desirous of understanding the human heart, who seeks to know the *men* of every country, who desires to discover those differences which result from climate, religion, education, prejudice, and partiality?

I should think my time very ill bestowed, were the only fruits of my adventures to consist in being able to tell, that a tradesman of London lives in a house three times as high as that of our great Emperor; that the ladies wear longer clothes than the men; that the priests are dressed in colours which we are taught to detest; and that their soldiers wear scarlet, which is with us the symbol of peace and innocence. How many travellers are there who confine their relations to such minute and useless particulars! For one who

D'ARGENS—*Continued*

se bornent à ces détails peu instructifs. Pour un qui entre dans le génie des Nations qu'il a parcourues, qui développe leurs mœurs, leur croiance, les idées qu'elles ont du culte divin, les intrigues & les cabales de leurs Prêtres, l'étendue de leurs connoissances dans les Sciences; vingt autres ne font mention que de quelques particularités qui ne peuvent être d'aucun usage pour la véritable Philosophie. J'appelle la véritable Philosophie, celle qui rend les hommes meilleurs, qui leur apprend à dompter leurs passions, qui leur inspire l'amour de la vertu & l'horreur du vice. Or, la seule étude de la Morale produit tous ces effets merveilleux [III, 146-48].

Borrowings of essentially the same kind as this occurred in nine other letters, ranging in position from the beginning to near the end of the collection as it was reprinted in 1762. The following list includes only unmistakable cases of translation or close paraphrase.

Letter IV (III, 21): The first sentence of the essay is modeled on *Let. Chin.*, I (I, 2), beginning of the third paragraph.

Letter IX (III, 36): The remarks on prostitutes which form the second paragraph of the letter are translated from d'Argens' *Lettre XXI* (I, 183-84). England is substituted for France as the country involved.

Letter X (III, 38-40): With the exception of the introductory paragraph and of a few scattered sentences, the whole letter—a description of the customs and religion of the Daures—is translated from d'Argens' *Lettre XXVIII* (I, 259-66).

Letter XII (III, 44-45): The account of English death-bed customs in paragraphs two to six is a slightly rearranged translation

GOLDSMITH—*Continued*

enters into the genius of those nations with whom he has conversed—who discloses their morals, their opinions, the ideas which they entertain of religious worship, the intrigues of their ministers, and their skill in sciences, there are twenty who only mention some idle particulars, which can be of no real use to a true philosopher. All their remarks tend neither to make themselves nor others more happy; they no way contribute to control their passions, to bear adversity, to inspire true virtue, or raise a detestation of vice [III, 32].<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> All the references to the *Citizen of the World* in this article are to the text of the third, or 1774, edition as reprinted by Gibbs, *ed. cit.*, Vol. III.



of bits of *Lettres V* and *VI* of d'Argens (I, 34-35, 40-43), where, however, the allusion is to France.

Letter XVI (III, 58-62): The whole letter—on the accounts of fabulous peoples to be found in European historical writings—is a considerably condensed translation of *Let. Chin.*, XXXI (II, 2-11).

Letter XIX (III, 72): The next to the last paragraph is taken from *Let. Chin.*, XLII (II, 117-18), where it forms part of a long development on Russian marriage customs.

Letter XLIII (III, 161-63): The opening passage on the loss suffered by humanity in the death of a philosopher is constructed out of two short developments in *Let. Chin.*, LXXXIV (III, 206, 209-10). The idea of the third and fourth paragraphs—the opprobrium often visited upon philosophers—together with some of the examples, is perhaps reminiscent of *Let. Chin.*, XXXVI (II, 53-60). In the fifth paragraph Goldsmith mentions d'Argens among the admirers of Voltaire, and refers in a note to "*Let. Chin.*" It is not clear that he had in mind any particular passage: praise of Voltaire is frequent in the *Lettres Chinoises*; see, for example, I, 271-82, II, 294-95; III, 189-90, 240-41, 264-65.

Letter LXIV (III, 240-41): The discussion of European titles in the first paragraph is a translation of the first two paragraphs of *Let. Chin.*, LXV (II, 359-60).

Letter CXVIII (III, 425-27): The whole account of Fum Hoam's experiences in Japan is a somewhat condensed translation of *Let. Chin.*, CXXXIII (V, 168-75, 177-78).

In all of these cases Goldsmith's procedure was similar to that in the passage from Letter VII quoted above. In the main he translated with a fair degree of fidelity to his original; but he did not hesitate to condense, to suppress details or sometimes whole developments, to substitute English examples for French, to heighten the balance and movement of the phrases or the concreteness of the allusions, to adjust his borrowings in various ways to a frequently different context. It would be instructive, did space permit, to analyze in detail the modifications which he made in the material furnished by d'Argens; such a study could not but throw into striking relief the extraordinary gift which Goldsmith possessed of simple, clear, succinct expression. For our present purpose, however, it is

enough to have established the fact that a not inconsiderable portion of the *Citizen of the World* had its origin in a deliberate act of translations.

In view of the certainty which we thus acquire that Goldsmith had the *Lettres Chinoises* before him during most of the period in which he was writing his own Chinese letters, it is perhaps legitimate to attribute to the influence of d'Argens certain resemblances between the two works which do not involve direct textual borrowing and which, therefore, would hardly justify, by themselves, such an interpretation. It is impossible to give here more than a bald enumeration of these resemblances; this is the less to be regretted as the accessibility of the *Lettres Chinoises* in American libraries makes verification of the parallels by scholars who may be interested comparatively easy.<sup>1</sup>

Letters I and II: Lien Chi Altangi is befriended by merchants at Amsterdam. Compare *Let. Chin.* I (I, 6), where the same thing occurs to Sioeu-Tcheou.

Letter II (III, 15): Coaches blocking up the streets of London. Cf. the description of the same phenomenon in Paris in *Let. Chin.*, I (I, 6-7).

Letter III (III, 18): Criticism of the notion that the strangeness of European customs implies a departure from "nature." Cf. *Let. Chin.*, LIII (II, 235-36) and, for the details, XXVIII (I, 259-70) and XXX (I, 283-84).

Letter III (III, 19-20): Comparison of English and Chinese fine ladies. Cf. *Let. Chin.*, II (I, 9-10, 12) and IV (I, 29-30).

Letter VI (III, 29): "Tien, the universal soul." Cf. *Let. Chin.*, VII (I, 48), XIV (I, 121), XLIV (II, 137), etc.

Letter X (III, 39): "The sectaries of Fohi." D'Argens, from whom the context is translated, has "Lao-Kium" (I, 262). But cf. *Let. Chin.*, XI (I, 81-91).

Letter XIII (III, 48): A "gentleman dressed in black," with whom Lien Chi discusses the monuments in Westminster Abbey. D'Argens in *Lettre LVIII* (II, 289-96) describes a conversation in a Paris bookshop between Sioeu-Tcheou and "un homme habillé de noir."

<sup>1</sup> There are copies at Harvard, at the University of Chicago, at the Newberry Library, Chicago, and doubtless elsewhere.

Letter XV (III, 57): "One of their doctors . . . ." Probably an allusion to the unnamed Jesuit whose theories concerning the souls of animals d'Argens summarized in *Lettre LIV* (II, 246-49).

Letter XIX (III, 71): "'Psha, man,' replied he, smiling; ' . . . one half of the kingdom would flog the other.'" Cf., for a similar remark in a similar context, *Let. Chin.*, XLIII (II, 133).

Letter XXXIII (III, 126): English comments on Lien Chi's personal appearance. Cf. *Let. Chin.*, I (I, 4-5).

Letter XXXIII (III, 128): Citation from the "*Journal ou Suite du Voyage de Siam. . .*" It is possible that Goldsmith learned of the existence of this work from the several references to it in d'Argens: see *Lettres CXXXIX* (V, 241), *CXL* (V, 257), *CXLI* (V, 268). He had, however, seen the book, or at least owed the passage quoted from it to another source than the *Lettres Chinoises*.

Letter XXXIII (III, 128): Lien Chi's familiarity with factors and missionaries in China. Cf. *Let. Chin.*, VII (I, 47).

Letter XXXVII (III, 138): "An ancient Guebre of the number, remarkable for his piety and wisdom." Cf. d'Argens' account of the virtues of the Guebres, *Let. Chin.*, CXVIII (V, 3-4).

Letter XLII (III, 157-58): Contrast between the stability of China, with her policy of toleration, and the anarchy of Europe, torn by revolutions and religious wars. Cf. *Let. Chin.*, VIII (I, 58-59) and LII (II, 230).

Letter LI (III, 191-95): A conversation between Lien Chi and a book-seller. There are two such conversations in d'Argens; see *Let. Chin.*, XXIX (I, 271-82) and LVIII (II, 289-96).

Letter LVI (III, 211): "Tomans." Cf. d'Argens' definition and use of this term in *Lettre XXII* (I, 201).

Letter LVI (III, 211): Description of the state of Russia. Apparently summarized from *Let. Chin.*, XXXV (II, 43) and LVII (II, 282-84).

Letter LVI (III, 211-12): Description of the German Empire. Apparently a generalization from *Let. Chin.*, CV (IV, 124-34) and CVI (IV, 135-45).

Letter LVI (III, 212): Description of Sweden. Cf. d'Argens' account of Denmark in *Lettre CXXXIV* (V, 179-89). It is significant that the *Public Ledger* text read: "Sweden . . . is probably

(like Denmark of late) only hastening on to despotism" (III, 212, note). The words in parenthesis were omitted from the collected edition of 1762.

Letter XCIX, *Public Ledger* text (III, 363, note): "Hyde rel. Pers." There are many references to Hyde in d'Argens; see Lettre C (IV, 161) and Tome IV, *passim*.

Letter CXI (III, 400): "Talapoins." D'Argens gives an account of the "Talapoins" of Siam in Lettre CXLI (V, 272-73) and elsewhere in Tome V.

Such are the principal correspondences between the *Citizen of the World* and the *Lettres Chinoises*. Whatever may be thought of certain of the parallels in the immediately foregoing list—and no doubt some of them can be explained as the result either of accident or of the influence of other reading—it is clear from all of the evidence that has been presented that Goldsmith was intimately familiar with d'Argens' work, that he kept it constantly by him while he was writing his series for the *Ledger*, and that he was indebted to it, not only for occasional passages and even whole essays—which he appropriated according to a method he had already practiced extensively in the *Bee*<sup>1</sup>—but also for numerous less precise suggestions of various kinds—details of his hero's experiences in England (the hint for the "man in black" almost certainly came from d'Argens), miscellaneous bits of Asiatic local color, the themes of a good many satirical or reflective developments.

It remains only to indicate the limits of the influence whose reality and general character have perhaps been made sufficiently clear. That, in spite of much indebtedness in detail, the *Citizen of the World* differed in many important respects from the *Lettres Chinoises*, no one who has read the two works can for a moment doubt. It was not merely that Goldsmith remained insensible to some of the most characteristic features of the latter production—to the metaphysical discussions, the historical narratives, the attacks on fanaticism and superstition, in a word, to the "philosophical" propaganda—but his finer gift of humorous invention, his greater concern for character and incident his less "interested" preoccupation

<sup>1</sup> See *Works*, ed. cit., II, 356-60, 410-14, 438-43, and A. J. Barnouw, "Goldsmith's Indebtedness to Justus Van Effen," in *Modern Language Review*, VIII (1913), 314-23.



with morals and manners—these qualities, which colored even his borrowings,<sup>1</sup> gave to his work as a whole an individuality quite impossible to confuse with that of the author of the *Lettres Chinoises*. In short, while his borrowings from d'Argens help to explain many details in the substance, and a few features of the scheme, of the *Citizen of the World*, and throw an interesting light on its writer's method of composition, they account for none of the traits which constitute the essential originality of Goldsmith's work.

RONALD S. CRANE

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

HAMILTON JEWETT SMITH

AMHERST COLLEGE

<sup>1</sup> Compare the next to the last paragraph of Letter XVI (III, 61) with its original in d'Argens (II, 10-11), and the whole of Letter XIX (on adultery) with d'Argens' treatment of the same theme (II, 126-36).



14 DAY USE



**RETURN TO** **CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT**  
202 Main Library

LOAN PERIOD 1  
**HOME USE**

4

2

3

5

6

ALL BOOKS MAY BE RECALLED AFTER 7 DAYS

1-month loans may be renewed by calling 642-3405

6-month loans may be recharged by bringing books to Circulation Desk

Renewals and recharges may be made 4 days prior to due date

**DUE AS STAMPED BELOW**

JAN 27 1979

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY  
BERKELEY, CA 94720

FORM NO. DD6, 40m, 3/78

©.

*Gaylord*   
PAMPHLET BINDER  
 Syracuse, N. Y.  
Stockton, Calif.

U.C. BERKELEY LIB



C035624

